THE PORT FOLIO.

BY OLIVER OLDSCHOOL, ESQ.

.....“VARIOUS, THAT THE MIND
OF DESULTORY MAN, STUDIOUS OF CHANGE,
AND PLEAS'D WITH NOVELTY, MAY BE INDULG'D.”
COWPER.

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FOR THE PORT FOLIO.

THE BRITISH SPY IN BOSTON.

LETTER III.

IN my last, I was induced to give you, my dear S——, a full length drawing of the “GIANT OF THE LAW,” to trace the bold and distinct features of his character with precision, and possibly with presumption. The American world having given him no adequate competitor, and his native town, though rich in legal ability, viewing him as the only oracle of professional knowledge, I have been assiduous in marking and comparing him, in my *mind's eye*, to all that I have known *clever*, or extraordinary at home. * * * * * * * * *
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But among the many honourable properties of his character, perhaps that of his LEARNING ought to have been considered as the most transcendant, since in America it is the most rare, while in that, and in every country, where the people is free, and enlightened, where the laws are written, and may be understood, an accurate knowledge of those laws must constitute the first and greatest attribute of their professors. The poetic glow of imagination, the fine scintillations of wit, the rapidity of perception and the ingenuity of a discriminating judgment, are as nothing, without the rich and solid foundation of law-reading. It is this, which constitutes *the profession*, intitling its possessor to the denomination of A LAWYER. We expect every artist to have studied the theory and principles of his art, and shall that calling, which implies the greatest supremacy of mind, be least understood, and most superficially acquired? Wherever the question shall be brought to the test between the natural brilliancy of what is termed genius, and the ascendancy of acquirement, directed by good sense, it is most certain, that the event will decide the principle. In Mr. Parsons, I have found *all* in an eminent degree united, and conspicuous, and thence have given more time to his delineation, than any single subject had a right to command. Of what remain, a sketch must answer, since the multitude of heads, that constitute the original group before me, will not admit time for each, to have a full length, neither to be finished with all the nice touches of correct colouring.

After much inquiry, and great attention given to the pretensions of his brethren, I have considered Harrison Gray Otis, as entitled to the next rank, and as having in Boston no superior, except that great man, who has no equal. Mr. Otis is, in age, under forty, and consequently among the youngest of those, who have professional eminence, and to such, as expect wisdom to be derived from grey hairs, his introduction will be considered premature and indecorous. But, holding the precedent of talent beyond that of seniority, Harrison Gray Otis is, in my judgment, next entitled to our animadversions. Many years since, in the early youth of this gentleman, before his judgment was ripened, and ere his talents had obtained maturity, charmed by the brilliancy of powers, that gave the promise of growing greatness, his native district elected him to represent them at the national legislature. The result of this choice disappointed expectation. Mr. Otis was rivalled and excelled by two men of the same profession, and from the same county, who, greatly his seniors in age, are considered, in some points, rather his inferiors at the bar. These were Samuel Dexter and Fisher Ames; men, distinguished and honoured for rare and respectable qualities, and whom I shall thence take a future opportunity of introducing to your acquaintance. The young Mr. Otis, when in Congress, was much too juvenile for the station, in which he stood, classed with, and in opposition to some of the proudest talents, and the best learning of the Union: consequently, less formidable to his opponents, and less applauded by his constituents, than a proper consciousness of his own powers must have convinced him, were justly his due. Whence, having been twice chosen by a flattering majority, he declined a re-election, and returned to the duties of his profession, it seems, with a determination to recover that ascendancy, which had been incidentally wrested from his genius. In this, he was successful; for Nature had done much to insure him the victory, in giving him a fair, open countenance, a fascinating smile, a graceful address, and a voice of melody, better attuned by himself, to the varied modifications of the mind, with less localism of tones and pronunciation, than any of his brethren. Clear, distinct, and forcible, his extempore speaking has an irresistible charm, and leaves his hearers more delighted, if not better instructed, than any voice I have heard in New England. In law knowledge he is, at present, neither overflowing nor deficient, and is every day adding, by his industry, to his already respectable acquirements. More than any of his associates at the bar, is he animated in argument, and successful in the pathos of personal appeal. Qualities, such as these, have necessarily acquired him great individual influence; and being a favourite member of the state legislature every competitor was distanced, and the Federal party united to a man, in conferring upon him the distinguished honour of the speaker's chair. This he has, in effect, graced and dignified. Prompt, lucid, and generally impartial, his deportment is fitted to soften the rancour of party animosity, and his smile to conciliate the virulence of opposition. Possibly, his refinement may sometimes appear to border upon *finesse*, and the polished benevolence of his accent to degenerate into adulation, by which he seems to neglect proper discrimination; and, resembling the greater light in the firmament of heaven, permits the kind glance of his eye to shine equally upon the good and upon the evil. Still, the most enthusiastic of his many friends and admirers, consider the speaker's chair as the prelude to a more exalted station, even that of chief magistrate to the state, since the present worthy and unassuming, but unsocial and unpatronizing character, who presides, is said to be wearied with a rank, uncongenial with the humility of his temper, and inauspicious to the retirement of his habits.

Mr. Otis is rich, liberal, and hospitable; his house appears to be the abode of social elegance, and the temple of domestic happiness: whence his political adherents are found to be his personal friends. His virtues, his talents, and his manners, uniting the general suffrage of respect, with the more irresistible claim of merited affection.

FOR THE PORT FOLIO.

CLIMENOLE.

A REVIEW POLITICAL AND LITERARY.

No. 12.

Memorabilia Democratica, or the history of democracy Containing a full and true account of that venerable science; interspersed with anecdotes, characters, and speeches, of eminent democrats, ancient and modern. Ornamented with thirty engravings of American democrats. By SLAVESLAP KIDDNAP, Esq. Foolscap 2 vols. 4to. pp. 1651.
Washington—Printed by Samuel H. Smith, for Duane and Cheetham, and Adams, and F. Blake, proprietors of the work.

It is a cause of great regret to me, that I cannot accompany the future criticisms of Mr. Kiddnap, on Mr. Jefferson's philosophical works, as I have done his former, with transcripts, at length, of the essays, on which he remarks. This method is no longer practicable. The works, which he now proceeds to notice, are too long and laborious, to be displayed, at large, in the narrow limits of a weekly publication. I shall content myself, therefore, with laying before the public, those extracts and references, which Mr. Kiddnap makes, in the course of his observations. Those, who desire to see these essays, in all their bulk, must submit to the task of prying open, for themselves, the heavy quartos of the American Philosophical Society. On this account, as well as on others, I lament extremely, that the proposal, made by one of its most intelligent members, did not prevail in that body; and which was, to publish their “*Transactions*,” in the form and size of “*three penny gifts for children*:” Certainly, such a plan would have promoted, in a high degree, that darling project of this society; a design as laudable as it is feasible, and which is known by the name of “*An universal diffusion of knowledge*.” For, it is easy to perceive that no science, in this American world, receives such universal and ready encouragement, as that which is, *at once, cheap, and within a narrow compass*. These two qualities, indeed, coincide very exactly with the extent both of *the purses and the minds* of most of our great men; whether commoners or philosophers. Concerning which two last-mentioned concomitants, I have observed, they are, for the most part, inseparable, in American greatness. For it has been my lot, to find very few men, *whose purses were not always in their minds*; unless it were those, who are, perhaps, full as numerous, *whose minds are never out of their purses*. Had the proposal of this member, in relation to the form and size of the “*Transactions*,” succeeded, it would have been, undoubtedly, attended with the happiest effects. For, in the first place, those *sage philosophers, of three and four years old*, by that frequent attrition, which their habits of severe investigation never fail to make them bestow on works, submitted to their inspection, would have occasioned, in due time, a call *for a second edition* of those invaluable labours. An event, which, under the existing discouragements of size and unwieldy matter, is, now, never likely to happen. In the

next place, inasmuch as these infant philosophers are very apt to squabble among themselves, and make the neighbourhood ring, with their clamours, about the works, put into their hands, it is. also, very likely, that, in such case, the labours of this society would, before this time, have *made some noise in the world*. A consequence, which, however desirable, has never yet followed them. Mankind being, and always having been, in relation to them, in a most quiescent and indifferent state; and so are likely forever, hereafter, to continue. I know, that it was objected to this proposal, when it was made, that the communications of the members of this association would be, probably, of a higher order of subjects, and in a more exquisite style of execution, than would suit with the capacities of the literati of the cradle and nursery; and that on this account, chiefly, it was rejected. I cannot wonder, that such an objection should prevail *within the circle of that society*; as, I have observed, men are generally inclined to set an undue value upon their own literary, as well as natural offspring. But, *without it*, an objection, of such a nature, could not possibly have been of any weight; inasmuch as, it cannot be denied, that by far the greater number of their publications are entirely upon a level, both in matter and style, with those celebrated *philosophical transactions*, which are circulated, under the names of "Jack the Giant Killer," "Mother Goose's Melody," and other high-sounding titles. From actual experiment, I have found Mr. Heckelwelder's story of "*the grasshoppers and ninekiller*," as recorded in the 124th page of the fourth volume of the works of that society, an excellent substitute for those interesting narratives, "*There was a frog lived in a well;*" and "*Who killed Cock Robin?*" That dreadful account of the unknown, and *unseen* animal, in Mr. Jefferson's Memoir, page 253, of the same volume, '*whose roaring resembled thunder*,' and 'whose eyes were *like two balls of fire*,' is also, both in sentiment and in adaptation to the capacities of infants, not a whit behind, and certainly equal, in point of authenticity, to that terrible story of "*The wolf and Little Red Riding Hood*," Indeed, the association is so natural, and the likeness so strong between these two famous histories, that my little boy, a child of three years old, never reads this memoir, by Mr. Jefferson, but he involuntarily stops, at the words, "*two balls of fire*," and exclaims, "Oh! *Grandmama, what two great eyes you've got*. As to Dr. Barton's Memoir on Amphibia, and that heroic hunt, to which he and Mr. Peale submitted, after "*frozen rattlesnakes in the winter*," all for the sake of science and *of memoir-writing*, it is so entirely *that species of philosophy*, in which children's fancies delight, that I have never known them tired with its perusal. His happy talent at description, and that *rare accomplishment of amplification in details*, which has enabled him to spin out an account of a very trifling pursuit into a story of twenty quarto pages in length, are doubtless the causes of that preference, which these young philosophers show for his labours, and which I shall hereafter have occasion more particularly to notice. I know of nothing more terrible, either in ancient or modern history, than that narration of his encounter with the rattlesnake, which makes a part of his memoir, and is told in the 376th page of the volume. It is, in truth, an union of two of the most remarkable adventures of Hercules;—*that with the hydra, and that with the poisoned shirt*. For, he tells us, though with more circumlocution, that, with his left hand, he seized *a wounded and frozen rattlesnake* by the throat, and squeezing open its mouth, with scissors, in his right, he cut into its jaws, when, mirabile dictu! ! "two or three *drops of venom flew out on his finger! !*" Oh! Modern Philosophy—quid non mortalia pectora cogis?

Having thus brought this masterly digression to a happy conclusion, according to the most approved rules of modern discipline, I now return, with infinite delight, to extract from Mr. Kiddnap's chapter on Mr. Jefferson's philosophical works.

"The next subject, on which Mr. Jefferson's genius is exercised, and which the immortal works of the Philosophical Society preserve, is one, entirely suited to his taste, and, in every respect, adapted to the comprehension of his mind. It commences in the 246th page of the volume before quoted, and is intitled, "*A Memoir on the discovery of certain Bones of a Quadruped, of the clawed kind in the Western parts of Virginia: by Thomas Jefferson, Esquire.*"

It will tend to throw some light upon this essay, and explain the exultation, which Mr. Jefferson, in the whole course of it, discovers, on account of its subject, if I relate an anecdote, which was told to me during my residence, in the spring of 1795, near the place of that great man's nativity, and which was universally circulated in that neighbourhood. It was said that Mr. Jefferson's mother, when she was big with our philosopher, dreamed, that she was brought to bed of "*a femur*," and "*an ulna*," crossed after the manner of those bones, on tombstones. The good lady was greatly disturbed at this vision, and could have no rest, until she had consulted all the fortune-tellers, in that part of the country, upon its prognostic. Their predictions, however, were little satisfactory. For, notwithstanding all agreed that the child, with which she was pregnant, would, some how or other, have a singular affinity with bones, each had a different opinion, as to the mode, in which this connexion would take place. It was said, by the first to whom she applied, that he would be *a great conqueror*, and, like Alexander or Caesar, raise a great monument to his glory, *by the bones of those he had slain in battle*. But, as there was no *death's head* in the vision, this soon yielded to milder interpretations. The next person, of whom she inquired, answered, that he would be either *a great surgeon*, or *a great farrier;* but which, it was beyond his art to divine. A third thought it was pretty plain he would be a *sexton*. And a fourth had no doubt at all that he would be *an excellent hangman;* one of whose perquisites is, usually, *the skeleton of the convict*. I could not, however, learn, that during infancy or childhood, he gave any signs of an extraordinary genius, in the direction which the dream seemed to indicate. It is true, when a boy, he was very fond of *picking bones;* but, whether it was from an appetite for *the integuments*, or a desire to view *the periosteum*, Mr. Jefferson himself assured me he was never able to determine. He was a youth of a very quiet and peaceable demeanour, shunning turbulent "arenas," and amusing himself, a thing not uncommon with boys, at his age, with collecting the skeletons of such animals, as came in his way. There was nothing, however, so remarkable, in this conduct, as to render a vision necessary to be a precursor of his eminence. It is true, he had, before he arrived at manhood, preserved, in a state, nearly perfect, the skeletons of a mouse, (mus Americanus) two kittens, (felis domesticus) and a bull-frog, (rana ocellata). He had, besides, the *cranium* of a monkey, the *vertebrae* of a boar, and the *os sacrum* and *os cocygis* of a goat. In addition to which, his *ornithological* collections were extensive. I recollect well that his art of *putting together geese*, and making them move *at his election*, was much celebrated. Having also, by means of his intimacy with the cook, the reversion of the poultry, which was eaten in the family, he had a rare exhibition of chicken's skeletons; all perfect, except in one particular, and in this, all were deficient. A circumstance, very extraordinary, and worthy of record, as it displays, in a strong point of view, the prevailing instincts of this great man. For notwithstanding his love of science, and his anxiety for a perfect chicken skeleton, he never could bring himself to look at *the drum-stick;* his natural antipathy to the instrument, whose name it bears, and his terrors at that "*bloody arena*," in which it is so principal an agent, was so great, that he always fell into convulsions, at the sight, which all his philosophy could not conquer. Doubtless, this antipathy and this instinct are, also, the sources of those two prudential maxims, which have been the pole-stars of his life, and which he has thus beautifully expressed; "*Never break my bones on any account:*" and, "*It is the first inquiry of a wise man, how to save his bones.*

I thought it proper to state these circumstances, inasmuch as they tend to justify Mr. Jefferson's own interpretation of his mother's vision, when he came at full age; and which was, that he was destined to be—A GREAT OSTEOLOGIST. In consequence of which he set up, after having served a due apprenticeship, the trade of a philosopher, and at the same time that he was willing to be thought attentive to the other branches of the business, he really bent his whole mind to *the department of bones*. At first he had no other stock to trade upon, but what was common to the whole company of philosophers: but, by the discovery, and appropriation to his exclusive use, of these bones of the Green Briar-cave, he acquired a stock of his own, by an industrious application of which alone, he has been enabled, under the smiles of the Philosophical Society, to rise to be one of the first dignitaries of American literature. On this account, Mr. Jefferson considers, and justly, that the dream of his mother, and the predictions of the fortune-tellers have been fulfilled. "LITERALLY" says he, "I HAVE MADE MY FORTUNE BY BONES." It is no wonder, therefore, that this essay upon these Green Briar bones, is held by Mr. Jefferson's admirers, and by himself, in high esteem. Certainly it forms the most solid basis of his literary fame: some of the merits of which I shall now attempt to discuss."—

As it is impossible to insert this exquisite criticism, on account of its length, in the present, I defer it, with great regret, until the succeeding number, when I dare promise the public abundant delight and instruction.

BIOGRAPHY.

THE LIFE OF MICKLE.

On the following character of Mickle, given by the writer of the account of his life in the "European Magazine," the editor of these poems observes, "that having known him intimately, and known him long, he thinks it strictly just."

"To those who are unacquainted with Mr. Mickle's writings, we need not point out the beauty, the strength, or the variety of his versification, the harmony of his numbers, and the vigour of his imagination. These are so apparent, that we risk nothing in declaring our opinion, that they must sooner or later force themselves into the notice of those who at present are strangers to them. Leaving his literary character, therefore, to find its own value, we shall confine ourselves to speak of him as a member of society. He was in every point of view a man of the utmost integrity, warm in his friendship, and indignant only against vice, irreligion, or meanness. The compliment paid by Lord Lyttleton to Thomson, might be applied to him with the strictest truth; not a line is to be found in his works, which, dying, he would wish to blot. During the greatest part of his life, he indured the pressures of a narrow fortune without repining, never relaxing his industry to acquire by honest exertion that independence which at length he enjoyed. He did not shine in conversation, nor would any person from his appearance have been able to form a favourable judgment of his talents. In every situation in which fortune placed him, he displayed an independent spirit, undebased by any meanness, and when his pecuniary circumstances made him on one occasion feel a disappointment with some force, he even then seemed more ashamed at his want of discernment of character, than concerned for his loss. He seemed to entertain with reluctance an opi-

nion, that high birth could be united with a sordid mind. He had, however, the satisfaction of reflecting, that no extravagant panegyric had disgraced his pen. Contempt certainly came to his aid, though not soon; he wished to forget his credulity, and never after conversed on the subject by choice. To conclude, his foibles were but few, and those inoffensive; his virtues many; and his genius very considerable. He lived without reproach, and his memory will always be cherished by those who were acquainted with him."

In this portrait of Mickle, his few imperfections are commendably thrown into shade, but his virtues are faithfully delineated, and cannot fail to impress the most advantageous idea of his character. Religion appears to have been a leading feature in his mind; but the zeal against infidelity which induced him to plan his Cave of Deism ought not to have rendered him insensible of the value of two such men as David Hume, and Adam Smith, so far as to circulate among his acquaintance the Heroic Epistle in ridicule of these ornaments of philosophy. To have threatened Garrick with a Dunciad if he refused to get up a very moderate tragedy, would seem inexcusable, were not the genus irritabile vatum almost proverbial.

The character of Mickle, as a poet, ranks very high among his countryman. His versification is undoubtedly very vigorous and manly; but certainly not equally remarkable for correctness. It unites the freedom of Dryden with the force and harmony of Pope. The English Lusiad is a truly classical performance, and stands unrivalled by any productions of the kind in our language, but the English Iliad. His Sir Martyn, Almada Hill, Pollio, and Mary Queen of Scots, if he had written nothing else are sufficient to entitle him to a classical distinction among the poets of our nation.

Of the Luciad he is not only an able translator, but spirited advocate. He has very judiously prefaced his translation with a copious and satisfactory introduction to the history of the poem, and accompanied it with notes that were nesessary to give it proper elucidation. The narrative is liberal and elegant, interspersed with many sensible observations, and just political reflection. In the critical part of his notes, he merits great praise; but he has sometimes, perhaps rather stept out of his way. The lively and ingenious, though inaccurate and ill-grounded criticisms and misrepresentations of Voltaire, respecting the Lusiad, have drawn from his pen such a severity of animadversion and reprehension, as seem scarcely justifiable, when occasioned by a difference chiefly affecting a point of taste. Voltaire, admits the Lusiad to be a work justly deserving of a distinguished rank in epic poetry, a work abounding in beauties, and exhibiting also some striking defects. It is, as he affirms, a poem without a plan; without unity; without propriety; for the machinery exhibits a monstrous combination of Christain and Pagan mythology. Vasco de Gama the hero of the poem, for instance, prays to the God of Israel in a storm, and the goddess Venus comes to his relief, "But we are told," says Voltaire, "that the machinery is allegorical; thus Mars is clearly designed to represent Jesus Christ, and Venus the Virgin Mary. All this may be true, but I own I should not have suspected it." He is not satisfied with eagerly defending the propriety of this allegorical interpretation, and with stating the obvious answer to the objection respecting the unity of the action, but he recriminates upon Voltaire, and exposes him to contempt and detestation. In his analysis of the Lusiad, he enters deep into the merits of the poem, and finds it possessed of all the spirit, and great component parts of the epic. The result of his examination of the machinery, and construction of the poem, on the principles of the Epopee, will satisfy men of taste and elegant researches. Men of minuter studies, and sentiments left enlarged, may, indeed, cavil at what they think some deviations from the epic system; that system which scholastic formality and mechanical minds have drawn from those great archetypes, who themselves know no rule but the implicit pursuit of nature.

If we consider only the state of the Iberian poetry at and even after, the time when Camoens wrote me must look upon his Lusiad as a wonderful performance. He was the original poet of his country. He had not, like Tasso, a Dante to Smooth his way, nor like Milton, a Spenser. Around him all was obscurity, and even an affectation of obscurity. The Spaniards looked with the highest veneration on the writings of Balthazar Gracian, and Luis de Gongora, because they were abstracted and unintelligible. Even their great poet Lopez de Vega, wrote in the same strange enigmatical style; a whimsical heterogeneous mixture of the enflure of the French, and the concetti of the Italians, interwoven with the sombrous, but fantastic ground of the Moresca. When these defects of the national poetry are considered, those of Camoens, in particular, will be thought the more excusable, and his excellences will do him the greater honour.

"Homer and Virgil" says Mickle "have been highly praised for their judgment in the choice of the subjects which interested their countrymen; and Statius has been as severely blamed for his uninteresting choice. But though the subject of Camoens be particularly interesting to his countrymen, it has also the peculiar happiness to be the poem of every trading nation. It is the epic poem of the birth of commerce. And in a particular manner the epic poem of whatever country has the controul and possession of the commerce of India. An unexhausted fertility and variety of poetical description, an unexhausted elevation of sentiment, and a constant tenor of the grand simplicity of diction complete the character of the Lusiad of Camoens; a poem which though it has hitherto received from the public most unmerited, and from the critics most unmerited injustice, was yet better understood by the greatest poet of Italy. Tasso never did his judgment more credit than when he dreaded Camoens as a rival, or his generosity more honour, than when he addressed his elegant sonnet, "Vasco le cui felici, &c." to the hero of the Lusiad."

Of the extraordinary talents of his illustrious contemporary, Tasso, appears to have been perfectly sensible. Montesquieu in his "Spirit of Laws," has, with a degree of impartiality, by no means peculiar to his character, allowed that the Lusiad unites the charms of the "Odyssey" with the magnificence of the "Æneid;" he might have added, with the majestic spirit and divine energy of the "Iliad" The fire of the Mæonian bard glows in the eye of Camoens, while he bears upon his aspect the serene dignity of the Mantuan muse. But he not only unites the power of composition that characterize the three ancient poems; he associates their different interests. The strong unconquered passions, the martial ardour, and stormy valour of the heroes at Troy, are powerfully represented in Gama's narrative of the Lusians and their wars. His piety, his tender attachment to his country, and affection for his prince, make us feel every thing for him that we have felt for Virgil's hero; and whatever attention, curiosity or concern the,

Qui mores hominum multorum vidit—

could possibly excite in the reader all these must be awakened in a more interesting manner by the author of the Lusiad. He suscribes to Voltaire's assertion, when he calls it une nouvelle esp'ece d' Epopee; but though the happiness of Camoens in the novelty of his subject must be acknowledged, yet it is certainly much in the manner and spirit of the "Odyssey," the conduct of which he has omitted to analyse.

MISCELLANY.

FOR THE PORT FOLIO.

The following excellent essay, written by a gentleman in England, and addressed to the Editor, will be perused with pleasure by the Johnsonians

The Candide of Voltaire, and the Rasselas of Johnson, morally and literally compared.

"The means are different, but the end the same."

It is nearly impossible to read the Candide of Voltaire, and Johnson's Rasselas, without an involuntary comparison of their respective excellencies. The subject of each, human life, is equally important; and though they both agree as to its misery, yet the modes of treating it forms the most striking contrast in the characters and the styles of the two men, and, in a very happy manner, discriminates their turn of national thought. There is a conciseness and an elegance in the Frenchman, that is inimitable. He is here, as in all his other writings, evidently above his subject; plays with it as with a toy, and his narration everywhere sparkles with the corrusiations of an active, and mercurial imagination. Humour heightened by the most cutting irony, is his predominant feature, and his caricatures ever extort the laugh of approbation. The judgment of the reader is hurried away by the variety, and rapid succession of the scenes, the novelty of the incidents, the vivacity of the diction, and the irresistible ridicule pervading the whole. The miseries of mankind claim no more of his compassion than their follies. Neither the sufferings of Candide, nor those of his acquaintance, once awaken the sigh of sympathy, and the vicissitudes they undergo, however extraordinary and cruel, with singular felicity, are made the source of our delight. The obstinate prejudices of Pangloss, his pertinaceous adherence to his favourite maxim in spite of experience, and in the midst of the heaviest affliction and universal calamity, sharpen the shafts of ridicule which the author levels against him with happiest effect; while the wavering doubts, the unbounded generosity, and amiable simplicity of his pupil, divert, reconcile, and endear him to us to the last. In no part hardly have we leisure to feel a moral. The selfish baseness and unfeeling ingratitude of mankind, serve but to provoke our mirth, and we are prepared for the burst of humour which commonly follows the most atrocious actions* We indeed remember our own Miss Cunegund and smile at former prejudices, satisfied that there are finer castles than Thunder Ten Tronk, and if the want of more than two-and-seventy armorial quarterings in our escutcheons did not prevent the union of our first loves, death or some other fatality, in all probability, had done it for us. And these are among the most serious reflections that Candide offers to the mind, or recalls to the memory. His six dethroned kings, though true to historic fact, serve only as figurants to fill up his grand carnival masquerade, and the awful example they furnish of the instability of human grandeur and power, scarcely strike us. Even the insensible depravity of the Dutch sailor during the earthquake, drawn in true costume fails to raise our indignation and abhorrence. He too cracks his jokes amid the

* In justice to Mr. Voltaire, it ought to be observed, that the remark of the old man on the banks of Propontis, in respect to the cultivation of his garden, deserves to be written in letters of gold.

most tremendous, and desolating scenes, the groans of the dying, and the mangled presence of the dead; and we behold a magnificent and populous city, with all its "gorgeous palaces, solemn temples, and cloud-capt towers," buried with its inhabitants without a groan. The author is always sure to please. He addresses himself constantly to the senses of his readers, and the feather of his pen tickles the brain, without correcting the heart. His actors are a kind of harlequins, who undergo such transformations on the natural, as we see them on the artificial stage, and our pleasure arises from the same cause in both;—the skill with which we are deceived; while the exquisite colouring of the scenes, and the dexterity in changing them, compleat the delusion. At one time, they are wantonly butchered; at another, solemnly hanged; then they are burned, for our amusement: when lo! a new deception, and we behold them once more to be deceived again. Such are the magic powers of Voltaire's wit!

How different are our emotions in reading the Prince of Abyssinia! While our imaginations luxuriously indulge in the description of the Happy Valley, we have barely time to catch a glimpse of supposed bliss, when Rasselas steps forth and obscures it. The solemnity of the style increases with the importance of the story. Our interest in the fate of the prince never forsakes us for a moment. Our hopes soar on the artificial wings of his friend the mechanist, and when he drops, our fears rise. We behold him in the lake, lend a help to draw him ashore, and then retire with Rasselas to a temporary dejection, which soon gives way to hope for a happier event. We next follow the prince to the middle of the mountain, work with him until day-light is discovered beyond the prominence, and issuing with him to the top, our fancy, with rapture, beholds "The Nile, yet a narrow current, wandering beneath us." Our hearts, too, in unison with his, "Seem to bound like prisoners escaped, and we share in the delights of a wider horizon." With Imlac also, we recollect, with increase of sensibility, the sensations, which vibrated within us, on our first casting our eyes on the "Expanse of the mighty deep." We embark with him "On the world of waters, cast our eyes round with pleasing terror, think our souls enlarged by the boundless prospect, and imagine we could gaze for ever, but soon find ourselves grow weary with looking on barren uniformity;" and while we recognise these images, thus reflected on our memories, "We enjoy, for a moment, the powers of a poet."

The survey of mankind which follows, their various habits, professions, and employments, leave a deep impression on the mind, and the heart is always mended through the understanding. Every chapter is, indeed, a moral, and wisdom teaches in every page. The author's reasoning shines with all the splendour and force of truth; his diction glows with imagery, and is every where profuse of all the beautiful and sublime decorations of eastern style and phraseology. The whole work, moreover, may be considered, as has been justly observed, "A beautiful poem in prose," original in its construction, and abounding in the most important and penetrating observations; at once solid and refined, awful and profound; often new, and always just; and the reader, whatever may have been the vicissitudes of his own life, is taught the useful lesson—to be contended in the sphere it has pleased Providence to appoint him. Voltaire wantons in sallies of sportiveness; commits his genius to the wings of fancy, and, regardless of probability, explores regions of imaginary nature, and paints them in the most fascinating colours. The images he chiefly presents to the mind, please from their novelty, and the spell that gives the principal interest to his heroes, is nothing less than absurdity itself. Of men, he draws the individual, rather than the species, and manners rather than life. His characters are, however, finely drawn, highly contrasted, and artfully discriminated; and though he contents himself with a comparatively narrow observation of the different modes of human existence, yet, is the sphere of his heroe's actions expanded over the old and new world. His reflections and deductions are few, and seldom serious: *for how can we expect morality from him, who reasons only to deride.* Johnson, rejecting sprightliness, indulges in stately solemnity; takes a less excursive range: but his descriptions and characters embrace all the modifications of life and manners, from a court to a cottage; from the lucubrations of the learned, to the diurnal avocations of the peasant. The great and invariable outlines of human nature are thus filled up with all the different shades and tints of colouring that give existence to his picture, and prove the copy's faithfulness to the grand original.

His delinations and conclusions are adapted to men of letters, rather than to the unthinking and vulgar. Hence, the Frenchman has the most numerous admirers, and the Englishman the most select. The former wrote to delight only; the latter blends instruction with amusement. All can laugh with the one, but few have the philosophy to moralize with the other. Of inventive powers, as distinct from the effusions of mere fancy, in which Voltaire so much excells, Johnson must claim pre-eminence. The former having borrowed his Country of El Dorado, and means of arriving there, partly from history, and partly from the Arabian Nights Entertainments.* It is the Happy Valley, in a larger scale, and is a singular coincidence of train of thought, that both authors should have conceived the same plan to demonstrate the impossibility of contentment in this world. But Johnson's is all his own, tradition, according to Milton, having placed the Paradise which secured the progeny of the Abyssinian monarchs on mount Omara, and he himself has chosen a mount for our first parents, in his own scheme.†

How far Johnson's exceeds Voltaire's in richness and luxuriance of imagination, and justness of conception, the readers of Rasselas and Candide may determine; and they may also decide the preference between the learned, and comprehensive definition of the various qualities essential to a poet, so eloquently described by Imlac, and the keen sagacity; and fastidious delicacy, exemplified in the most noble and erudite critick, Pococurante. As to style, it would be difficult to choose where both are models in their respective ways, and alike demand equal admiration.

The performance of the one, is a personal satire on an individual,‡ as well as a general one on mankind, embellished with the most ludicrous, yet the most acute, poignant, and, sometimes, malignant sarcasms on human nature with which profligacy itself could have attired it: that of the other, an affecting, but true likeness of man's frailties, his weaknesses, and his wants, such as he really is, without the broad mirth of unfeeling humour to hide them.

The reflections, that follow are solemn and sad; and nothing but the hope which offers of perfect happiness in another world can recompense us for the misery we have seen experienced in this. But it should be remembered, in favour of the author of Rasselas, that as men would laugh rather than weep, the design of Candide has an accidental advantage to which genius can lay no claim. It must be, after all, confessed, that, though the Frenchman places every thing in a ridiculous point of view, the Englishman throws a sombre cast over his picture, that accords with his constitutional melancholy, and national phlegm. Yet it is somewhat remarkable, that both authors should leave the mind in a kind of suspense: Candide being in doubt at the last, whether all is not for the best; and Rasselas seeing throughout all the diversified conditions of men, happiness no where to be found, determines without fixing the choice of life, to return to Abyssinia. The grave and saturnine may safely solace themselves with Candide, while the frolic and the gay would do well to attend to the history of Rasselas.* B. B.

* Vide Sinbad's Sixth Voyage.

† The scholar may amuse himself by comparing the Happy Valley with the celebrated gardens of the Roman Flora, and the Grecian Alcinous; and those of the African Hesperides, and the Asiatic Horti Adonis. Milton's description yields to neither.

‡ Leibnitz.

* It is a curious and well known fact, that Voltaire, and Johnson were writing their histories about the same time, without either being privy to the other's design. Johnson wrote his "In *seven evenings* to defray his mother's funeral expenses." What time Voltaire employed to finish his is not known. Vide Boswell's Johnson.

FOR THE PORT FOLIO.

THE RURAL WANDERER. NO. 19.

Facilis est ad beatam vitam via; inite modo boni[s] auspiciis, ipsisque diis bene juvantibus. SEN.

Philosophers, in all ages, have been too fond of describing a virtuous life, as a life of labour, danger and privation. Vice has been delineated with a thousand charms, by those who have made it their profession to recommend the love of virtue; and the portrait of virtue has super-abounded with gloomy and repulsive shades. Pleasure has been represented sleeping upon beds of roses, and Wisdom wandering among wilds and precipices. The system of Solomon, indeed, is more rational than those of most coetaneous or modern sages: he was decided in the opinion, that the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths, peace. This delightful doctrine is confirmed and fortified by the splendid genius of Montaigne. Virtue, says that charming writer, is not, as the schoolmen represent her, placed on the top of a steep mountain, rough and inaccessible. They who have approached her, on the contrary, find her seated on a fine, fertile, and pleasant plain, from whence she beholds all things below her: and, if we labour to find her, our way lies through shady and green roads, sweet, flourishing and pleasant, of an easy and smooth ascent, like that of the celestial arch.

'Facilis descensus Averni,' says a very eminent poet, and 'Facilis est ad beatam vitam via,' says a philosopher, of little less celebrity. Some have exhorted us to love virtue for its own sake, and others, from the consideration, that the hardships of a virtuous life will be remunerated by ultimate profit and pleasure. But, in all my *wanderings*, I have found but few who represent the path to its temple, as pleasant and alluring. In this respect, it may be desirable to found a *new school* of wise men, and moralists. Even the mind of the Colossus of modern learning was tinged with the gloomy superstition of antiquity. He describes, however, with that eccentricity of thought, peculiar to himself, the path of piety, rosy, pleasant, and melodious, in its avenue, but dusty and uneven in its high-way. His oriental *Wanderer*, in the commencement of his journey, listens to celestial music, is fanned by zephyrs fragrant with the essence of the primrose, and sprinkled with the dews which descend from groves of spices; but the ardour of noon induces him to decline to a more pleasant road, cool, verdant, and flowery, but leading to destruction.

It is time to give to Virtue what is Virtue's due, and to tell the truth, and the whole truth, to all who feel an inclination to make a pilgrimage to her temple. Montaigne's description of her situation is a correct one; and equally correct is the idea of Seneca, that the way to happiness is plain and easy. Without virtue there can be no happiness; and the innocent peasant is happier than the guilty prince. How superior was Cincinnatus, guiding the plough over his little farm of seven acres, to Caesar, inthroned, flattered, idolized. The rural dictator walked in no other paths, but those of piety and peace, except when his country was in danger; and the moment his victorious arm had scattered the foes of Rome, he returned, to study nature, on the bank of his rivulet, *splendidior vitro*, and to worship his household gods, in his own humble mansion. His life was one continued scene of mingled serenity and sublimity. It was the very quintessence of terrestrial felicity. Caesar wandered in the ways of pleasure and ambition; he found them ornamented with poisonous flowers, and their brilliancy shaded with clouds of malignant gloom. When his friend at a rustic hamlet among the Alps, inquired of him whether envy and ambition inhabited that gloomy retirement, he gravely answered: "I had rather be the first man here, than the second in Rôme." He would have preferred the monarchy of Malta to the dictatorship, less than perpetual, of the universe. How tasteless his pleasures! How tormenting his ambition!

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STEPHEN SORROWFUL'S LAMENTATION.

[*From a British paper.*]

MR. EDITOR,

I am that insulated being called an Old Bachelor; a creature wearisome to myself and beloved by no one. I have spent the noon of my days in a single state, from the dread of incurring the expenses incident to a married life with a woman who had nothing; and now sorely do I repent that I had not generosity enough to overlook this consideration in favour of a charming girl that I truely loved, and who wanted nothing but fortune to recommend her. I was formerly clerk to her father, then a merchant of great respectability, but some years after greatly reduced by the unfortunate turn of affairs in the late contest between us and America. When he failed I was settled in the world, and might have saved his amiable girl from many a year of fatigue and distress into which their poverty immersed them; but with *sang froid*, for which I now detest myself, I then stood aloof, tore my thoughts from the sweet Eliza, and driving forward into the heart of the city, determined to lose myself in the recesses of counting-houses and the accumulation of money; thus voiding all the plagues and expenses of a family, for which I deemed the society of an elegant and affectionate woman by no means an equivalent. Alas! Mr. Editor, I now see how I miscalculated; how much such a partnership would have been for my advantage in the long run. I now put the mutual participation of pleasure and pain, the endearments of our children, that flattering interest which Eliza would have taken in me (for whom, by the way, nobody now cares a straw); I put all these on the credit side of the ledger, and find in the opposite page only such a portion of expenses as I have actually brought upon myself, by being drawn in to give tavern dinners, and a thousand other extravagancies that young men know not how to avoid. You will easily see, when a just account is made out, what I have gained, or rather what I have lost. Instead of the bright hearth and smiling faces of my family, instead of sitting down in the midst of beings who owe life to me, and portioning out their little meal with the delicious sensations of a father, I take my solitary chop at a coffeehouse, and afterwards saunter to the theatre, where venal beauty spreads her net, and I am caught! Alas! here is no mind, here is no modesty to make sentiment interesting. After having seen a public entertainment with Eliza, with delight might we have passed the remainder of the evening! her taste and sensibility would have made us live the hours over again with additional pleasure; her bosom would have been my harbour in the storms of life, and there I should have found recources from *ennui* in the calm season of prosperity; in the day of sickness her voice could have whispered comfort, and, in my dying hour, the pure invocation, of my children might have availed me at the throne of grace. What a sad reckoner have I been, Mr. Editor! I am now as *gray as a badger*, and have not a single relative in the world; I have long retired from business, but my fortune brings me no enjoyment, my dog leads nearly as rational a life; I eat, and drink, and sleep, alternately, as he does, for I now fear to become the prey of some indigent dame, who would overlook my grey hairs and infirmities, in consideration of coming in for a third of my wealth, and therefore avoid much commerce with the sex, from which, though I might once have derived happiness, I can now only expect trick, or at best ridicule. But what can a man do who has let avarice run away with him in his youth, when all the social affections should have been at their out-posts to prevent it? All that remains for such a man (after the example of a culprit going to execution), is to warn the multitude how they fall into this error; to assure them that the good which is not participated is not half enjoyed; and that those who abandon a young woman from motives like mine, as they do not deserve happiness, so they never will obtain it. And moreover, Mr. Editor, if you print this, please to add, that an equal mixture of love and prudence forms the only and most delicious conserve they will have the faculty of relishing all their life long: either, taken seperate, is drejudicial; one being too austere, and the other too sweet: they must be blended, to render them happily effective, and if any persons have skill enough to make up the composition after my recipe, I shall not have bemoaned myself, nor you have inserted this, in vain.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

STEPHEN SORROWFUL.

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On falling into the indolence of old age prematurely.

There prevails an opinion, that, after a certain age, the mind, like the body, having arrived at its compleat size, ceases to admit of that increase which we call improvement. Many appearences seem to justify such an opinion; but I am inclined to believe, that, though the mind at a certain age, may, from several causes, shew a tendency to become stationary, yet its tendency may be counteracted by extraordinary efforts and exertion. The machine, by long operation, may have incurred the impediments of excessive friction, or some of the wheels may be nearly worn out; but a little oil judiciously applied, and a few repairs ingeniously made, may restore its motions and augment its force.

One considerable proof, that, when the mind has reached the *acmé* of its improvement, it becomes for a little while stationary, and then retrograde; is drawn from observing that the second or third production of an author is often inferior to his first, even though the first, were the produce of his juvenile age.

But is it not probable that the exertions of the author may have been remitted after having obtained the distinction which first stimulated his earlier diligence? Success operates on the minds of many like the luxuries of Capua, on the soldiers of Hannibal, after the passage of the Alps, and the conquest at Cannæ.

When the strength of the body begins to decline, its companion seems to indulge it, with a sympathizing indolence. The road that leads to repose is smooth, flowery, and seducing; and many there are who enter it, long before repose is necessary. If they could acquire self-command enough to avoid the charms of the syrens, they might still make great advances in climbing the steeps of science and virtue. But it must be allowed that greater efforts are required than the generality of mankind are disposed to make, at any time in their lives, and much less in their decline.

Yet the history of literature affords many animating examples, to prove that great works may be produced after the middle of life, Sophocles and Theophrastus composed excellent works when they were nearly a hundred years old. Our own Milton, whose Paradise Lost is an effort of mental activity equal to any which antiquity can boast, did not begin it, till he had arrived at that age when, in the opinion of many, the mind is receding from excellence.

Julius Cæsar Scaliger, who became a prodigy of learning, did not commence the study of Greek till he was near forty. He did not even know the Greek characters till about that time; nor did he devote himself entirely to a life of letters till he was forty-seven. His days till then had been spent in an unsettled manner, chiefly in the army, with habits and dispositions unfavourable to study. But he had a mind which, like that of his namesake, the Roman conqueror, was formed to bear down all obstacles; and age, instead of abating his vigour, served but to harden and corroborate the sinews of his intellect.

It seems indeed reasonable to suppose, that works which depend on the warmth and vigour of the imagination, on pathos and sensibility of heart, would always be produced in the greatest perfection at an early period; but the examples of Sophocles and Milton, who wrote the finest poetry, the one in extreme old age, and the other at a mature age, serve to prove that theories concerning the human mind are too fallacious to be entirely relied on. The defects and failures of nature may be in great measure supplied or prevented by prudence and perseverance. But laziness and want of spirit suffer them to creep on before nature intended.

Thus is life in effect abbreviated. Early old age and early dotage are introduced by an abject dereliction of our own powers. We labour to insrease our fortunes, and suffer our faculties to run to ruin without reluctance. But it is surely worth while to contend strenuously for their preservation. Of how little value are the enjoyments of life, when we come to vegetate in stupidity, in the midst of all that, should delight our senses, inform our understanding, enrich our memory, and glitter on our imagination! It is worth while to pursue every method which has a tendency to prolong our mental existence. Among these I will venture to enumerate, a constant yet moderate exercise of our abilities, a daily accumulation of new Ideas, a recollection of the old, a rule over the passions, and temperance in wine and all the pleasures of the glutton and debauchee. We often accuse time and nature for decays which are caused by our own neglect. Instead of immerging ourselves in the pursuit of wealth, which we shall never enjoy, and honours, which are empty bubbles, let our desire be to preserve our faculties unimpaired to the last, and to shine, as the sun shines bright through the whole of its progress; and though with abated heat and effulgence at the close of

it, yet with a serene and venerable lustre, till it decends to the other hemisphere.

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From "The Repertory".

THE CARAVANSARY.

The knowledge of the ancient languages has always been considered highly useful by those best qualified to decide; and the most distinguished writers and speakers in their own language have uniformly proved the greatest proficients in Greek and Roman literature. The superiority of this branch of education, over all others, is so generally acknowledged in England, that it is exclusively honoured with the illustrious titles of scholarship and learning. By a scholar and a man of learning, they understand one profoundly acquainted with classical literature, and critically conversant with the Greek and Latin authors.

Indeed, if it be considered, that a person will write and speak English with taste and elegance, in proportion to his classical knowledge, and that the greatest orators and authors in the language, have been formed in the school of the ancients—one would reasonably conclude, that the superiority of this knowledge would never be called in question. Classical learning alone, if he has genius, will enable a man to make a much greater figure in the world, than all the science in the universe, without it.

The object of literature, is men and manners; the object of science is material substance and external nature. The one fits us for action, the other for speculation. By the study of literature we become historians, orators, poets, and statesmen; and gain that knowledge of mankind, and those powers of language, which enable us to serve them by our eloquence, or amuse and instruct them with our literary productions. Science has little connection with life and manners, except when applied to mechanical purposes, and the mere mathematician is of all animals the dullest and most useless. Mathematicks may be useful to discipline the mind, and to form part of the superstructure of education, but if you would have the building either useful or ornamental, the ground work must be classical literature. Barrow, in his late treatise on education, justly observes, that the best classical scholars always make the best mathematicians. It is true, that they do not generally pursue the mathematics, because men of lively imagination and of an extensive range of thought, are not fond of confining themselves to the dryness of demonstration on subjects not immediately interesting.

Who are the first writers in the English language? Addison, Johnson, Hume, Gibbon, and Robertson. How were they educated, and by what means did they attain the excellence which has immortalized them? By classical literature.

Who are the first orators and statesmen now living? In England, Pitt and Fox are allowed to transcend all others, whose literature, particularly that of the latter, is chiefly classical. Mr. Fox, says the author of the Pursuits of literature, is fond of Greek, and Dr. Joseph Warton, a most competent judge, bears testimony to his profound knowledge and exquisite taste in Grecian literature.

If we ask the same question with respect to those who have distinguished themselves on the bench and at the bar, we shall receive the same answer, and find, on examination, that Hardwicke and Mansfield, Dunning and Erskine, were educated in the school of the ancients. Lord Hardwicke was one of the chief writers of the Athenian letters, a work with which the Abbé Barthelemi was so greatly pleased that he declares, in a letter to lord Dover, that, had he been previously acquainted with it, he should not have undertaken his elegant travels of Anacharsis.

Those who depreciate ancient literature, are either ignorant declaimers, or conceited philosophists. The decline of it in France, was, probably, one cause of their revolution. Mere men of science undertook to write on political, moral, and religious topicks, which can be understood and explained to advantage by men of literature only.

I shall conclude this paper with the sentiments of the great Johnson, which must have much more weight with men of sense and virtue, than the united opinion of the whole National Institute, with his Imperial majesty at their head.

"*The purpose of Milton, as it seems, was to teach something more solid than the common literature of schools, by reading those authors that treat of physical subjects; such as the Georgick, and astronomical treatises of the ancients. This was a scheme of improvement which seems to have busied many literary projectors of that age. Cowley, who had more means than Milton of knowing what was wanting to the embellishments of life, formed the same plan of education in his imaginary college.

"But the truth is, that the knowledge of external nature, and the sciences which that knowledge requires or includes, are not the great or the frequent business of the human mind. Whether we provide for action or conversation, whether we wish to be useful or pleasing, the first requisite is the religious and moral knowledge of right or wrong; the next is an acquaintance with the history of mankind, and with those examples, which may be said to embody truth, and prove, by events, the reasonableness of opinions. Prudence and Justice are virtues and excellencies of all times and of all places; we are perpetually moralists, but we are geometricians only by chance. Our intercourse with intellectual nature is necessary, our speculations upon matter are voluntary, and at leisure. Physiological learning is of such rare emergence, that one man may know another half his life without being able to estimate his skill in hydrostaticks or astronomy; but his moral and prudential character immediately appears.

"Those authors, therefore, are to be read at schools, that supply most axioms of prudence, most principles of moral truth, and most materials for conversation; and those purposes are but served by poets, orators, and historians.

"Let me not be censured for this digression as pedantic or paradoxical, for if I have Milton against me, I have Socrates on my side. It was his labour to turn philosophy from the study of nature to speculations upon life; but the innovators, whom I oppose, are turning off attention from life to nature. They seem to think, that we are placed here to watch the growth of plants, or the motions of the stars. Socrates was rather of opinion, that what we had to learn was, how to do good and avoid evil."

CRITICISM.

[From the Edinburgh Review.]

John Wooodvil: *a Tragedy. By Charles Lamb. To which are added, Fragments of Burton, the author of the Anatomy of Melancholy. Robinsons. London.* 1802.

We have often regretted, in perusing the dramatic compositions of the ancients, that we do not possess any of those earlier specimens of the art in its state of rudeness, from which the merit of succeeding dramatists might best be determined. It is always a consolation to badness, that there is something worse; and the greater number of our tragic writers have therefore a just ground of complaint against the fraud of the stages of antiquity, which, by transmitting only their best productions, have deprived them of the power of looking back to pieces inferior to their own. We have dramas of Eschylus, indeed; but Eschylus, 'pallae repertor honestae,' had already raised poor barefoot Tragedy on buskins, and given her a comfortable cloak to her back. Our loss would be irreparable, were it not for a fact, which, though very obvious, has been strangely overlooked;—we have still among us men of the age of Thespis, and indeed of every age, since men first ventured to compose. There is not a single century, to which we cannot find, at present, corresponding tastes and faculties of every kind: and it is surely by their own qualities, that men should be estimated and arranged, and not by the revolutions of planets, which are foreign bodies, and have no more relation to the earth which is animated, than that which was burned or buried in the earliest priests of Bacchus.

In the drama, however, though we have had innumerable specimens of the *imperfect*, which, in composition, is by much the most common species of *past time*, we have long expected in vain a specimen so truly *perfect*, as to approach the purity of the great father of the stage; and we own, that our disappointment has been greater at this failure of genius, as in that inferior division of the art, which consists in recitation, we have often been gratified with a glimpse of the original *plaustrum*. At length, however, even in composition, a mighty veteran has been born. Older than Eschylus, and with all the spirit of originality, in an age of poets, who have had before them the imitations of some thousand years, he comes forward, to establish his claim to the ancient *hircus*, and to satiate the most remote desires of the philosophic antiquary.

The tragedy of Mr. Lamb may indeed be fairly considered as supplying the first of those lost links, which connect the improvements of Eschylus with the commencement of the art. We shall not, however, insist that it be received with complete acquiescence, till we have given a short account of its fable, and afterwards compared it with those ideas of the most ancient drama, which may be inferred as best suited to the known manners of the time.

Sir Walter Woodvil, having been an active partizan of the commonwealth, is obliged to fly, at the restoration of Charles, and a price is set upon his head. He chooses, however, to remain in England, with his younger son Simon; and they spend their time chiefly in Sherwood Forest:

> 'Nigh which place, they have ta'en a house,
> In the town of Nottingham, and pass for foreigners
> Wearing the dress of Frenchmen."

His elder son, the hero of the tragedy, who, with views of ambition, had attached himself to the royal party, takes possession of his paternal estate, and abandons himself to every profligacy, with a crowd of riotous companions. In a fit of intoxication, he reveals to Lovel, one of his pretended friends, the place of his father's concealment; and Lovel, with a single companion, hastens to the forest, to seize Sir Walter; but, awed by the undaunted appearance of the father and the son, they 'both slink off;' and Sir Walter, knowing by whom the information must have been given, dies of horror at John's treachery. On learning all the consequences of the communication he had made, the wretched inebriate is seized at once with head-ach and remorse: and the drama concludes with a narrative of his mysterious feeling of the forgiveness of heaven, at an early hour, on Sunday morning, as he was kneeling in the church of S. Mary Ottery, 'on a little hassock in the family pew.' On rising, he had 'yearned to say his prayers in the church;' and flying to it, 'found the door wide open, whether

* See Johnson's life of Milton.

by negligence he knew not, or some peculiar grace to him vouchsafed, for all things felt like mystery.' The narrative is addressed to Margaret, an orphan ward of his father, who, early betrothed to John, and feeling herself slighted by him, had fled from the profligacy of his house to Sir Walter, in the forest, on whose death she returned, to comfort his repentant son. The artifice with which the poet prepares his audience, for the narrative must be admirably productive of theatrical effect. It introduces, what we believe is a novelty on the stage, a peal of church bells giving their summons to morning service.

[*A noise of bells heard.*]

MAR. Hark the bells, John.
JOHN. Those are the church bells of St. Mary Ottery.
MAR. I know it.
JOHN. St. Mary Ottery, my native village,
In the sweet shire of Devon;
Those are the bells. p. 100.

The exactness of John's information is of peculiar use, as Margaret, having been some time at Nottingham, may be supposed to have forgotten the name of the parish, and perhaps of the sweet shire itself; and the cautious and solemn iteration at the close, in an affair of much moment, gives an emphasis to the whole, that is almost inimitable.

Of the most ancient drama, the plot would certainly have no regular union of events, all gradually converging into one. It would be simple, in what may strictly be called fable, though apparently complicated, from the want of bearing of the few parts upon each other. Above all, it would be very turbulent, and would probably consist chiefly of the buffooneries of slaves, and the incoherent follies of intoxication. The first great actors are said to have been 'peruncti faecibus ora,' a visor, admirably typical of a drunkard, and of peculiar beauty, in the eyes of a 'spectator functusque sacris, et potus, et exlex.' Accordingly, we find in Mr. Lamb's tragedy, that half of the dialogue is spoken by servants and drunkards; nor is it wonderful, since, at the period of the action, as the hero of the piece expresses it, 'now universal England getteth drunk.' On drunkenness, indeed, the whole is founded; for the only tragical incidents of the piece arise from a discovery made in the thoughtlessness of intoxication.

With the importance of gesture on the ancient stage we are well acquainted; and it is evident, that the author means a great part of his eloquence to be performed in that expressive way, as he has introduced a considerable portion of dialogue, which, in mere language, is almost insignificant. In the following passage, in which four servants are represented drinking, all the eloquence is in the cup, which has thus as fair a claim, as any of those who hold it, to be considered, as a person of the drama.

DANIEL. Here's to thee, brother Martin. (*drinks.*)
MARTIN. And to thee, Daniel. (*drinks.*)
FRANCIS. And to thee, Peter. (*drinks.*)
PETER. Thank you, Francis. And here's to thee. (*drinks.*)
MARTIN. I shall be fuddled anon. p. 4. 5

In the same scene, the characters become so very brief, that if due care be taken by the manager, to give them grave faces, they might almost pass for ministers of state, in the disguise of serving men.

FRANCIS. Well, I have my suspicions.
PETER. And so have I.
MARTIN. And I can keep a secret.
FRANCIS. (*To Peter.*) Warwickshire you mean. (*Aside.*)
PETER. Perhaps not.
FRANCIS. Nearer perhaps.
PETER. I say nothing.

The ministerial silence of Lord Burleigh is great; but even silence itself is nothing to this. Three characters are afterward introduced, that appear but once, and say only a few words; so that, as they must have been created for some great purpose, it is evident, that a vast deal has been left to the bodily eloquence of the actors.

(*Enter, at another door, three calling for Harry Freeman.*)
Harry Freeman, Harry Freeman.
He is not here. Let us go look for him.
Where is Freeman?
Where is Harry?
(*Exeunt the three, calling for Freeman.*)

We may remark here, as tending to increase that confusion so happily expressive of drunkenness, the ingenuity of the artifice, by which four speeches are given to three persons, without stating to whom the fourth shall belong.

(*To be continued.*)

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE.

From a correspondent in London, says the Editor of the Charleston Times we have been lately surprised with the following interesting information:

"After devoting a suitable portion of this letter to the Political state of the country, some remarks on its Literature will not prove unacceptable. You may no doubt have heard that the celebrated SOUTHEY has employed his talents for some time past in composing an Epic Poem, founded on the pretended exploits of MADOC, the Welsh Navigator, who is supposed to have discovered America several centuries before the birth of COLUMBUS.—This work has already appeared, and adds no insignificant wreath to that immortal crown of glory, which the whole literary world has unanimously decreed him. The Poem is contained in twenty four books, and is, in my opinion, infinitely superior to the same Author's *Joan of Arc*.—But what will surprise, and since you are a Student at Law, what may afford you much greater pleasure, is a publication, not many days out, under the title of,

COMMENTARIES ON THE LAWS OF ENGLAND, VERSIFIED BY EDWARD LEICOMB—FROM THE TEXT OF SIR WILLIAM BLACKSTONE.

"The motives for such an extraordinary publication will be best explained by the Translator himself, from whose preface I shall make a short extract, requesting at the same time, your confidence that no opportunity shall be lost of transmiting a copy for your perusal.

"The advantages," continues Mr. LEICOMB, after enumerating the difficulties attendant on his arduous undertaking, "must be obvious at the first sight, to the meanest capacity. The utility of verse in the communication of knowlege is really incalculable—its aid to the memory is inconceivable, in rendering the recollection of what we would wish to retain far easier than any other mode which has been yet adopted. This important truth has been incontrovertibly established by the experience and approbation of every succeeding age. Another important reason for which I was induced to undertake this work, is the preference which youthful minds generally give to poetical ornament.—After dwelling on the majestic and sublime descriptions of Homer and the Mantuan Bard, and other pleasing pursuits which precede the study of the law, the Student enters with disappointment on the dry and unentertaining doctrines of Jurisprudence, and pursues them often with disgust. I hope in some measure to obviate this serious inconvenience, by clothing in verse the Lectures of Sir William Blackstone, which is generally the first book that is put into the young Student's hands." Thus, continues Mr. L.—But I will fill the remainder of my paper with one or two quotations from this curious work.—The first book only has yet appeared; and in the second chapter is the following paragraph, which varies very little from the text:—

"Thus when the Great Unknown from nothing form'd
This universe, and out of Chaos wild
And Anarchy created matter, he
On it impress'd fixed principles and Laws,
Without whose agency 'twould cease to be,
When he imparted motion to the World,
Of motion he established certain Laws.
To which all bodies, moveable themselves,
Did erst submit. So when the artist forms
Of wondrous mechanism, the little Watch,
Whose faithful hand describes the varying hour,
So long as faithful to the laws prescrib'd,
Its operations prove, it moves compleat,
And answers every end for which 'twas form'd"

And in chapter 9, Book 1st, are the following remarks on the Statue of ELIZABETH, for Provision for the Poor:—

"Whereas, if only they whom cheerless want
And Poverty with all its woes depress—
If only they who, heirs to Misery,
Ne'er knew the comfort of a wintry garb,
Were cloathed, and for their labour amply paid,
Soon Industry would smile in every cot,
And sweet Contentment on each feature beam;
The humble Peasant would no more repine,
But work with pleasure at his daily task;
No murmurs would the blithsome Swain express,
Nor e'er disquietude his rest disturb.
Well would he know, that when the hand of time
Had scatter'd o'er his head the frost of age,
Or weakness had enfeebled every limb,
Then and then only, would the rich stretch forth
The fostering hand of comfort and of ease;
Or when the tender spring of Innocence and Youth
Forbad his offspring for themselves to toil,
Mild Charity would for each want provide,
And watch them with a Parent's gentle care."

SKETCH OF CHRISTOPHER ANSTEY, ESQ.

The celebrated author of the Bath Guide. He is an officer in the army, and published the above excellent poem, in the year 1767. Upon its first appearance it was very generally read and admired, and has most signally survived the temporary reign so commonly the lot of similar productions. This may, however, be justly attributed to its playful and humorous satire, levelled rather at the group of whim and folly, than against individual excentricity: and as the aggregate character experiences little variation in the course of thirty or forty years, so is it natural that it should long be recognized and admired, when delineated by the pencil of so skilful a master. Some years afterwards Mr. Anstey published "An Election Ball, in Poetical Letters from Mr. Inkle at Bath, to his Wife at Gloucester, with a Poetical Address to John Miller, Esq. at Batheaston Villa:" which, though inferior to the former poem, abounds with a considerable degree of wit and humour. He likewise published a Poetical Paraphrase upon the Thirteenth Chapter of the first Book of Corinthians: which serves to evince, his due estimation of his prominent talent in the first instance, and that he then succeeds best when he takes in hand subjects of a fanciful and ludicrous cast. He is also author of. "The Priest Dissected," a Satire: "Ad. C. W. Bampfylde, Epistola Poetica Familiaris:" and the Farmer's Daughter, a Poetical Tale founded on fact, published in 1795, with the laudable view, "to set innocence on its guard, and to promote the cause of virtue." This unfortunate damsel had been seduced by a military officer, and was afterwards deserted by him: filled with anguish, shame, and remorse, not without some remains of love for the destroyer of her innocence, she left her father's house in search of her perfidious lover, and perished through fatigue and cold, in one of the inclement nights of the severe winter of 1794. To the elegant pen of this gentleman have also been attributed some beautiful verses, addressed to a friend, which appeared some time ago in the Bath Herald.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

FOR THE PORT FOLIO.

[In the Gentleman's Magazine for July, 1804, the latest which has reached America, we find the following beautiful poem. It is intitled, "Ode for his Majesty's Birth-day, June 4, 1803, written extempore by THOMAS MOORE, Esquire, Poet Laureat for *Ireland*, pro tempore."]

Where is now the smile that lighten'd
Every hero's couch of rest?
Where is now the hope that brighten'd
Honour's eye, and Pity's breast?

Have we lost the wreath we braided
For our weary warrior men?
Is the faithless olive faded?
Must we pluck the bay again?

Passing hour of sunny weather!
Lovely in your light, the while,
Peace and Glory wed together,
Wander'd through our fairy isle!

And the eyes of Peace would glisten,
Dewy as a morning sun,
When the timid maid would listen
To the deeds her chief had done.

Is the hour of dalliance over?
Must the maiden's trembling feet
Waft her from her warlike lover,
To the desert's still retreat?

Fare you well! with sighs we banish
Nymph, so fair, and guest, so bright;
Yet, the smile, with which you vanish,
Leaves behind a soothing light.

Soothing light, that long shall sparkle,
O'er yon warrior's sanguine way,
Through the field, where horrors darkle,
Shedding Hope's consoling ray.

Long the smile his heart will cherish,
To its absent idol true;
While around him myriads perish,
Glory still will sigh for you.

Sacred chain, from heaven descended,
Chain, that Britain calls her own,
Which, by FETTERS, PURE and SPLENDID,
BIND'ST A PEOPLE TO THE THRONE.

Blest, we hail the morn, that shining,
Fair and welcome from above,
To the ties so softly winning,
Adds another link of love.

Brightly may the chain be lengthen'd,
Through the lapse of future hours,
When the links, by glory strengthen'd,
Peace again shall deck with flowers!

SELECTED POETRY.

TO VESPER.

Thou, who beholdst with dewy eye,
The sleeping leaves, and folded flowers,
And hear'st the night wind lingering sigh,
Through shadowy woods, and twilight bowers;
Thou wast the signal once that seem'd to say,
Hilario's beating breast reprov'd my long delay.

I see thy emerald lustre stream,
O'er these rude cliffs, and cavern'd shore;
But here, orisons to thy beam
The woodland chauntress pours no more;
Nor I, as once, thy lamp propitious hail,
Seen indistinct through tears; confus'd, and dim, and pale,
Soon shall thy arrowy radiance shine
On the broad ocean's restless wave,
Where this poor, cold swoln form of mine
Shall shelter in its billowy grave,
Safe from the scorn the world's sad outcasts prove.
Unconscious of the pain of ill-requited love.

BALLAD.

In one thou'dst find variety,
Cried Dick, would'st thou on wedlock fix;
I rather should expect, cried I,
Variety in five or six,
But never was thy counsel light,
I'll do't, my friend,—so said, so done,
I'm noos'd from life, and Dick was right,
I find variety in one.

Her tongue has more variety
Than music's system can embrace;
She modulates through every key,
Squeaks treble, and growls double base.
Divisions, runs, and trills, and shakes,
Enough the noisy spheres to stun;
Thus, as harsh Discord music makes,
I find variety in one.

Her dress boasts such variety,
Such forms, materials, fashions, hues,
Each animal must plunder'd be,
From Russian bears, to cockatoos.
Now 'tis a feather, now a zone,
Now she's a gipsy, now a nun;
To change like the cameleon prone;
An't this variety in one?

In wedlock's wide variety,
Thought, word, and deed, we both concur,
If she's a thunder-storm to me,
So I'm an April day to her,
Devil and angel, black and white:
Thus, as we Hymen's gauntlet run,
And kiss, and scold, and love, and fight,
Each finds variety in one.

Then cherish Love's variety,
In spite of every sneering elf,
We're Nature's children, and an't she,
In change, variety itself?
Her clouds and storms are will'd by Fate,
More bright to shew her radiant sun;
Hail, then, blest wedlock, in whose state,
Men find variety in one.

[In the "Hunter of the Alps," a very new opera, by Mr. Dimond, junr. *Batista*, the *Boniface* of the scene, sings the following]

SONG.

I keep a snug inn by the side of the road,
Where all, who bring money, are welcome to bait;
The muleteer grins, when he spies my abode,
For I *take in* the traveller early and late:
An equipage stops, and I bow to the stranger,
The mules may keep fast, or must feed on the manger;
While the pride of my larder I shew to my lord,
And a delicate chicken cook up for his board:
'Tis true, that my poultry is sometimes found tough,
Yet, *six years ago*, it was tender enough.
If folks chance to cut little, they'll sleep more at ease,
And enjoy a down bed, very noted—for *fleas!*
Still from worlds old or new,
Paris, Spa, or Peru,
Born next the north pole, or hatch'd under the line,
Guests from each quarter,
The Turk and the Tartar,
The Russian, the Prussian,
Hollanders, Polanders,
Gentiles and Jews,
Here mix and confuse,
And all of them—all of them—flock to my sign.
Should a guest, in a passion, despite of my care,
Complain of ill lodging, and rail at bad fare,
I've always a salvo to keep conscience still,
And, to balance *short commons* present a *long bill*.
So, if there was nothing to *eat*, he should say,
He'll find, to his cost, there is plenty to *pay*.
Perhaps, for extortion, I meet with a curse,
But I pocket an oath, when I draw out a *purse*:
For though evil words often wound a good name,
Yet gold makes an excellent plaister for fame;
And when *honour lost* with *cash gain'd* I divide,
The *weight* of the argument rests on my side.

[*From an English paper.*]

SONNETS FROM SHAKSPEARE.

BY ROMEO, ON FIRST SEEING JULIET.

Act I. scene 4.

Ah! who is she who dazzles thus the sight,
And bids the glimmering torches burn more clear,
Whose beauty hangs upon the cheek of night,
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear?

But, ah! her beauty seems for earth too dear,
So much her charms all living charms outshine:
And, ah! too rich for use, how much I fear,
That beauty, such as hers, can ne'er be mine.

Yet will I duly watch her place of stand:
Sure, love before this night I never knew,
And with her touch make happy my rude hand,
For ne'er such beauty blest my wondering view.
All charms I now resign, that once were dear,
And henceforth—ever—vow my sole devotion here.

TO NIGHT, BY JULIET.

Act III. scene 2.

Thou lingering Sun, withdraw thy envious light,
And, Darkness, spread thy sable veil between;
Then shall my Romeo, shrouded by the night,
Leap to these arms, untalk'd of, and unseen.

Lovers the darkling path of bliss can find,
And need not borrow from the day its aid:
Beauty supplies a light, for love is blind,
And seeks congenial shelter in the shade.

Come, gentle Night, give Romeo to these arms,
Ah! give him now, and when my love shall die,
Cut him in little stars: he'll lend thee charms,
And add such glories to the dusky sky,
That all the world, in love with Night, shall pay
No worship to the garish face of Day.

ON A PANE OF GLASS.

Wise was the man, with emblematic hand,
Who first on this transparent plate of sand,
The name of woman, Nature's fairest queen,
Display'd, engraven with the diamond keen.
Well knew he, that the glass and jewel join'd,
Were truest emblems of her face and mind:
In lovely woman, for from woman flows,
The chief, the truest blessing life bestows,
A thousand charms—a thousand faults unite:
As frail as glass, though as the diamond bright.

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